



DBRRA: Asking Questions - Seeking Answers.
Accountable Open and Transparent Governance.

Friday, 10 February 2023

Petition - Preamble

Local Government Act 1995, Part 4, s. 4.14 Elections and other Polls.

REQUEST FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL ELECTION IN April 2023

On 1st December 2022, four Shire Councillors and the Shire President walked out (quit) due to what they perceived as unreconcilable differences with members of the public when questioned over transparency on certain development projects and shire loans. The reason given by the councillors for the walk out was that they felt, they were being bullied by the community who were simply asking for transparency.

The councillors who quit did not consult the remaining four councillors about their intentions of walking out. The remaining four were blindsided and had no thoughts of abandoning their responsibilities and did not perceive any bullying.

As a result of the walk-out by the five, the remaining four councillors (your elected representatives), were stood down instantly by the Minister for Local Government, John Carey, as it was declared the council was now null and void due to the lack of there being a full council (quorum). The Minister, John Carey then installed one 'Commissioner', Gail McGowan, to take the place of the eight Councillors and the Shire President (the entire council).

The Commissioner is paid out of Shire funds. She has told the community that she will run the shire herself in place of the people's elected representatives, as she sees fit, until the next Council elections in October 2023.

We believe this is too long to be without our local voices. It must be community members who are in charge of Council not a CEO and Commissioner.

The walk-out of the five councillors, has resulted in not only you losing your voice through your councillors, but also an estimated financial cost to the community of over \$200,000, which is a major issue.

However, it's not just about financial concerns. it's the forfeiture of our voice, around projects and the loss of local input at a critical time within our shire, as major spending decisions are hanging in the balance.

We propose a Extraordinary Council Election in April 2023 and not October 2023, for us to restore our community's voice. By electing a new council, the leadership then comes from locals. This could result in considerable financial savings, despite the cost of an early election, which will be far less than the cost of continuing with a Commissioner until October.

The petition:

We respectfully request.

- 1. THE MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT, MR CAREY, TO GRANT AN EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL ELECTION IN APRIL 2023.**
- 2. INSTRUCT THE COMMISSIONER (GAIL MCGOWAN) NOT TO CHANGE ANY DECISIONS MADE BY THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL.**

Help Required:

- Please help by distributing this Petition throughout our shire with your family and friends.
- Copies can be downloaded and printed from the DBRRA website. www.dbrra.org

On behalf of Donnybrook Balingup Ratepayers & Residents Association Inc. I would like to thank you for signing this Petition.

Regards
Brad Fowler
President DBRRA